

Statement on Gulf War Illnesses

June 21, 1996

In March 1995, I announced my intention to leave no stone unturned in our efforts to determine the causes of the illnesses being experienced by veterans of the Gulf war and to provide effective medical care to those who are ill. Since that time, we have been pursuing a wide range of initiatives on Gulf war illnesses, including re-examining intelligence and operational records for evidence of possible exposure to chemical or biological weapons.

As part of this ongoing effort, the Department of Defense, based partly on information brought to its attention by the United Nations Special Commission, has confirmed that, shortly after the war, U.S. troops destroyed an Iraqi ammunition bunker that contained chemical weapons. Chemical detectors were used by U.S. troops both before and during the destruction operation. While we have no evidence today that Americans were exposed to chemical weapons during the operation, this is a very important issue which we will continue to investigate thoroughly.

The release of this new information reflects my commitment to unraveling the Gulf war illnesses problem. We will continue to work closely with the Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses to ensure that we are doing everything possible to address the health consequences of service in the Persian Gulf. We will also continue to make new information on this important issue available to veterans and their families.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

June 22, 1996

Good morning. Today I want to talk with you about keeping our families safe and secure, and especially about how we can help parents to protect their children.

Since I took office we've worked hard to combat the crime and violence that has become all too familiar to too many Americans.

We passed a sweeping crime bill in 1994, against steep opposition from partisan politicians and special interest group pressure. We're now putting 100,000 new police officers on America's streets in community policing. Nearly half of them are already funded. We banned 19 deadly assault weapons, passed the Violence Against Women Act to help our communities resist domestic violence. We passed the Brady bill, and already it's stopped over 60,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers from buying a gun.

We're helping our communities give children something to say yes to, positive programs and good role models to help them stay away from crime and drugs and gangs. These laws are making a real difference across our country. In city after city and town after town, crime and violence are finally coming down. Crime is coming down this year overall in America for the 4th year in a row. But we all know we've got a long way to go before our streets are safe again.

And as we move forward, we have to remember we're not just fighting against crime, we're fighting for something: for peace of mind, for the freedom to walk around the block at night and feel safe, for the security of neighborhoods that aren't plagued by drugs, where you can leave your doors unlocked and not worry about your children playing in the yard. We're fighting to restore a sense of community, and most of all, we're fighting for our children and their future.

Nothing is more important than keeping our children safe. We have taken decisive steps to help families protect their children, especially from sex offenders, people who, according to study after study, are likely to commit their crimes again and again. We've all read too many tragic stories about young people victimized by repeat offenders. That's why, in the crime bill, we required every State in the country to compile a registry of sex offenders and gave States the power to notify communities about child sex offenders and violent sex offenders that move into their neighborhoods.

But that wasn't enough, and last month I signed Megan's Law that insists that States tell a community whenever a dangerous sexual predator enters its midst. Too many children and their families have paid a terrible